

WE CLAIM:

1. A method for operating a vehicle communication unit within a mobile vehicle communication system, the method comprising:
5 determining a primary communication mode failure;
 initiating a secondary communication mode responsive to the primary communication mode failure determination; and
 operating a telematics device in the secondary communication mode within the vehicle communication unit.
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2. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the primary communication mode failure comprises:
 detecting if the telematics unit can not initiate contact with a wireless carrier system; and
15 detecting if the telematics unit can not maintain communication with the wireless carrier system.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein detecting if the telematics unit can not initiate communication with a wireless carrier system comprises:
20 determining if the telematics unit is not equipped to operate in the primary communication mode; and
 determining if the telematics unit is not designed to operate in the primary communication mode.
- 25 4. The method of claim 1, wherein determining the primary communication mode failure comprises:
 determining a GPS unit within the vehicle communication unit is unable to receive a GPS satellite broadcast from a GPS satellite broadcast system.
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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the secondary communication mode is a short range wireless technology.

5 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the short range wireless technology is Bluetooth standard.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein the secondary communication mode is a wireless networking technology.

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8. The method of claim 7, wherein the wireless networking technology is selected from the group consisting of: IEEE 802.11 series standard, Dedicated Short Range Communication standard, and Bluetooth.

15 9. The method of claim 1, wherein operating the telematics device in the secondary communication mode comprises:

communicating data to a wireless carrier system via a second mobile vehicle within a mobile vehicle communication system.

20 10. The method of claim 1, wherein operating the telematics device in the secondary communication mode comprises:

receiving data from a wireless carrier system via a second mobile vehicle within the mobile vehicle communication system.

25 11. A computer readable medium for operating a vehicle communication unit within a mobile vehicle communication system, comprising:
computer readable code for determining a primary communication mode failure;

30 computer readable code for initiating a secondary communication mode responsive to the primary communication mode failure determination; and

computer readable code for operating a telematics device in the secondary communication mode within the vehicle communication unit.

12. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the computer
5 readable code for determining a primary communication mode failure comprises:
computer readable code for detecting if the telematics unit can not
initiate communication with a wireless carrier system; and
computer readable code for detecting if the telematics unit can not
maintain communication with the wireless carrier system.

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13. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the computer
readable code for detecting if the telematics unit can not initiate communication
with a wireless carrier system comprises:
computer readable code for determining if the telematics unit is not
15 equipped to operate in the primary communication mode; and
computer readable code for determining if the telematics unit is not
designed to operate in the primary communication mode.

14. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the computer
20 readable code for determining a primary communication mode failure comprises:
computer readable code for determining a GPS unit within the
vehicle communication unit is unable to receive a GPS satellite broadcast from a
GPS satellite broadcast system.

25 15. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the secondary
communication mode is a short range wireless technology.

16. The computer readable medium of claim 15, wherein the short
range wireless technology is a Bluetooth standard.

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17. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the secondary communication mode is a wireless networking technology.

5 18. The computer readable medium of claim 17, wherein the wireless networking technology is selected from the group consisting of: IEEE 802.11 series standard, Dedicated Short Range Communication standard, and Bluetooth.

10 19. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the computer readable code for operating the telematics device within the secondary communication mode comprises:

 computer readable code for communicating data to a wireless carrier system via a second mobile vehicle within a mobile vehicle
15 communication system.

20. The computer readable medium of claim 11, wherein the computer readable code for operating the telematics device within the secondary communication mode comprises:

20 computer readable code for receiving data from a wireless carrier system via a second mobile vehicle within the mobile vehicle communication system.

21. A system for operating a vehicle communication unit within a
25 mobile vehicle communication system, the system comprising:

 means for determining a primary communication mode failure;
 means for initiating a secondary communication mode responsive to the primary communication mode failure determination; and
 means for operating a telematics device in the secondary
30 communication mode within the vehicle communication unit.